



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

Liberalism, local government reform, and political education in Great Britain and British India, 1880-1886

Citation for published version:

Weinstein, B 2018, 'Liberalism, local government reform, and political education in Great Britain and British India, 1880-1886', *Historical Journal*, vol. 61, no. 1, pp. 181-203.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X1600056X>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1017/S0018246X1600056X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X1600056X)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Historical Journal

Publisher Rights Statement:

This article has been published in a revised form in The Historical Journal <http://dx.doi.org/XXXXXXXXXX>. This version is free to view and download for private research and study only. Not for re-distribution, re-sale or use in derivative works. © copyright holder.

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



**‘TO CREATE AND EDUCATE A PUBLIC SPIRIT’: LIBERALISM, LOCAL
GOVERNMENT REFORM, AND ‘POLITICAL EDUCATION’ IN GREAT BRITAIN
AND BRITISH INDIA, 1880-1886**

BENJAMIN WEINSTEIN

University of Edinburgh

ABSTRACT

This essay attempts to shed new light on the character of late-Victorian Liberalism by investigating its political priorities in British India. It takes as its particular focus the debates which raged between 1881 and 1883 over the Government of India Resolution on Local Self-Government. Along with the Ilbert Bill, the Resolution comprised the centerpiece of the Marquis of Ripon’s self-consciously Liberal program for dismantling Lytton’s Raj. When analyzed in conjunction with contemporaneous Liberal discourse on English local government reform, the debates surrounding the Resolution help to clarify many of the central principles of Late-Victorian Liberalism. In particular, these debates emphasize the profound importance of local government reform to what one might call the Liberal project. Beyond its utility in effecting retrenchment, efficiency, and ‘sound finance’, local government reform was valued by Liberals as the best and safest means of effecting ‘political education’ among populations, in both Britain and India, with increasingly strong claims to inclusion within the body politic.

This essay attempts to shed new light on the character of late-Victorian Liberalism by investigating its political priorities in British India. It takes as its particular focus the debates which raged between 1881 and 1883 over the Government of India Resolution on Local Self-Government. Along with the Ilbert Bill, the Resolution comprised the centerpiece of the Marquis of Ripon’s self-consciously Liberal program for dismantling Lytton’s Raj. Indeed, the late-Victorian politicization of the Raj was central to Ripon’s motivations in promulgating the Resolution. According to the Indian Civil Servant H.M. Kisch, Lytton had been ‘the first Viceroy who has throughout his administration worked as a servant of a Party at home only, regardless of the views of his Council, and he has done all that was possible to render the office an unstable one dependent on the success or failure of the Ministry.’¹ From its revival of Durbars to its

forward policy in Afghanistan, Lytton's Viceroyalty comprised the very apex of the Tory vision for India. Ripon's appointment in 1880, after Gladstone had failed to persuade first Kimberley and then Goschen to take up the Viceroyalty, politicized the office even further. At the time of his appointment, Ripon's views were markedly more 'advanced' than those of most Liberals, including Gladstone himself. Sir Henry Maine was not alone in believing Ripon to be a 'dangerous radical.'² As Ripon himself confessed in 1881, his tenure as Viceroy not only 'deepened [his] liberal convictions,' but actually made him 'more radical every day.'³ Yet, as Sarvepalli Gopal has pointed out, 'Gladstone never later regretted his decision [to appoint Ripon] ... because of Ripon, the influence of Gladstonian Liberalism became a permanent element in the political scene of British India.'⁴ When analyzed in conjunction with contemporaneous Liberal discourse on English local government reform, the debates surrounding the Resolution help to clarify many of the central principles of Late-Victorian Liberalism. In particular, these debates emphasize the profound importance of local government reform to what one might call the Liberal project. Beyond its utility in effecting retrenchment, efficiency, and 'sound finance', local government reform was valued by Liberals as the best and safest means of promoting 'political education' among populations with increasingly strong claims to inclusion within the body politic.

I

In both India and Great Britain, 'political education' entailed a process of acculturation through which individuals and groups would become habituated to 'self-government' by internalizing the values and mentalities of the governing class. One can characterize 'political education' as a tool of 'liberal governmentality.' The press, public meetings, and petitions (Gladstone's 'three graces of the Constitution') were each conceptualized by the Victorians as vehicles for promoting

political education among the general populace. Moreover, as James Thompson has recently argued, faith in the educative capacity of this ‘constitutional troika’ was shared by Conservatives and Liberals alike. Liberals alone, however, professed a faith in the instrumentality of local government in developing the mental and moral capacities of its participants. In fact, many Liberals went so far as to argue that participation in institutions of local governance was the best, and perhaps the *only*, means of nurturing the development of the kind of expansive, non-sectarian, and ‘public spirited’ outlook among the general population which was necessary to the proper functioning of a polity. As Joseph Chamberlain said of local government in 1885,

In addition to its having accomplished the exact reforms which it was intended to effect, it has proved an educational agency of the highest value. It has elicited and nurtured qualities in the case of individuals which might otherwise have languished for lack of opportunity; it has opened the way from parochial politics to Imperial statesmanship; its discipline, its competition, its stimulus have invested those who have actively taken part in it with a dignity of a solid and energizing kind.⁶

Advocates of political education claimed that experience of local government would necessarily impart the character-building virtues of responsibility, self-mastery, and civic consciousness to both individuals and communities which had hitherto been excluded from political life. Parish vestries, municipal councils, and other local boards were consequently often valorized by such Liberals as ‘schools of civic virtue’ and ‘training schools for imperial government’. Ripon himself characterized institutions of local government as ‘engines for the training of the people.’⁷ As this suggests, even in India, local government reform was never simply conceptualized as an efficiency measure aimed at promoting ‘sound finance’ and retrenchment. Nor was it merely a

‘safety valve measure’ designed to pacify communities which would continue to be excluded from the ‘actual’ corridors of political power.⁸ Rather, Liberals understood local government reform to be a vital tool for effecting the kind of fundamental psychological transformation which was deemed necessary for the safe development of a liberal political culture. Moreover, a comparative analysis of discourses on municipal reform in Britain and India suggests that Liberals applied precisely the same logic in both contexts.

Yet, the language of ‘political education’ has received far more attention from historians of British India than from historians of Britain. This is a pity not only because the domestic importance of ‘political education’ has been undervalued, but also because its imperial meaning has been misrepresented as a consequence of its domestic neglect. In ignorance of its domestic British usage, historians of British India have argued that ‘political education’ was central to the construction of an imperial ‘discourse of difference’ which emphasized the supposedly vast evolutionary distance standing between Britain and India. Thomas Metcalf has claimed, for instance, that Ripon’s municipal reforms, and their attendant appeal to ‘political education’, were ‘permeated with a condescending paternalism’ which re-enforced, rather than weakened, existing notions of Indian cultural inferiority.⁹ Similarly, Douglas Haynes, in his work on colonial Surat, has included ‘political education’ among his list of the ten keywords and phrases which ‘carried particular potency for the ruling group’ in establishing the legitimacy of their privileged position.¹⁰ Yet, as the following essay argues, the language of ‘political education’ was invoked by Liberals in strikingly similar ways, for strikingly similar ends, at precisely the same historical moment in both Britain and India. Far from being a discourse of difference, the late-Victorian commitment to ‘political education’ suggests the depth of Liberal universalism.

Jan Palmowski has claimed that ‘urban local government legislation in the first half of the nineteenth century responded primarily to practical need rather than ideological design,’ and that only from the 1850s did ‘local government become an increasingly liberal concern.’¹¹

Regardless of whether this chronology is entirely accurate, there is unquestionable merit in the view that local government was more crucial to the Gladstonian Liberal party than it had been to earlier ‘liberal’ coalitions.¹² Indeed, ‘local self-government’ was among the six core principles of the ‘Liberal’s Creed’ outlined by T.M. Webb in 1868.¹³ Gladstone’s first government was responsible for a raft of significant local government reforms – from the enfranchisement of female ratepayers in 1869 to the creation of a new Local Government Board in 1871 – which massively expanded the powers of municipal councils. The municipalization of gas and water supplies, the widespread adoption of Public Library Acts, and the provision of new municipal public health services – from public baths to paved roads - was enabled by the reforms of these years.¹⁴ Consequently, the late-Victorian civic flourishing of provincial cities was widely understood to be a Liberal achievement. For Thomas Hughes, the late-Victorian Tory Mayor of Liverpool, there was simply no connection between ‘Conservative principles and the general policy of sewerage and roadmaking.’¹⁵ Little wonder, then, that Gladstone emphasized local government reform as a top priority in his program for the 1874 elections.¹⁶ Especially from the mid-1870s the drive for ‘local self-government’ operated as a critically important Liberal binding agent and identity marker. Indeed, considerations of party cohesion and consensus were paramount in enhancing the importance of local government to the Liberal platform as the party became increasingly at odds with itself. Amid the swirl of centripetal forces separating out Chamberlainite radicals, Gladstonian reformers and Whig grandees, the development and reform of ‘popular self-government’ held the party together.¹⁷

From the late-1870s, just as local government reform became increasingly important to Liberal party cohesion, the ‘eastern question’ prompted a Liberal re-evaluation of British engagement in South and Central Asia. If India’s role in shaping Disraelian foreign policy forced Liberals to clarify their thinking on India’s value to Great Britain, it also encouraged vigorous Liberal debate over the precise nature of Britain’s obligations to India.¹⁸ Robert Lowe’s view – that British India was a dangerous geo-strategic liability and that the despotic nature of Lytton’s regime would ultimately both undermine the legitimacy of the Raj and corrupt British domestic political culture – was shared by many Liberals.¹⁹ Most, however, also conceded that although India compromised British international security, quitting India was not an option. Gladstone himself, while granting the many foreign policy vulnerabilities to which the Raj exposed Britain, emphasized Britain’s moral and political obligations to India in a series of *Nineteenth Century* essays. It was in these essays that Gladstone promised ‘justice for India’ and first outlined his three-pronged Indian program of ‘sound finance, moderate establishments, and a liberal extension of native privileges.’²⁰ The implementation of this program would entail an erasure of much of Lytton’s atavistic regime and a rejection of Disraeli’s ‘new imperialism’ generally.²¹ Ripon’s 1882 Resolution on Indian Local Self-Government, which promoted all three features of Gladstone’s Indian policy simultaneously, was consequently laden with political significance.²²

II

The 1882 Resolution was the culmination of a series of reform measures, initiated by the Indian Finance and Commerce Department during the autumn of 1881, which sought to decentralize Indian taxation on a ‘uniform and extended basis.’ Evelyn Baring, the Viceroyal Council member most responsible for advocating a decentralized system of finance, claimed precedent for these measures in Mayo’s earlier attempts to shift the management of local rates from Central

and Provincial administration to local bodies, and to remove from the municipalities the heavy charges associated with policing.²³ In late September, 1881 Ripon issued his first Resolution on the subject, instructing all Provincial Governments to ascertain ‘what items of receipt and charge can be transferred from “Provincial” to “Local” heads ... [and] what redistribution of items is desirable.’ The Provincial Governments were also asked to consider ‘ways of equalizing local and municipal taxation throughout the Empire, checking severe or unsuitable imposts, and favoring forms most in accordance with popular opinion and sentiment.’²⁴

The 1881 Resolution was a finance initiative aimed at effecting the first strand of Gladstone’s Indian program (‘sound finance’), but little concerned with the third (‘liberal extension of native privileges’). However, it cleared the decks for further reform of central-local relations and signaled the Government of India’s intention to liberalize the operation of Indian local government more generally. Although a handful of Governors questioned the efficacy of localized taxation, all complied with Ripon’s request to explore avenues of financial retrenchment, and some even went so far as to implement schemes giving effect to it by the early months of 1882. The transition from finance to politics, and the corresponding shift from skepticism among the officers of the Provincial Governments to outright opposition, came in May 1882 when Ripon issued his Resolution on Local Self-Government. The new Resolution insisted on five related reforms. First, it urged that municipal councils should be established in every Indian city and town of over 5,000 inhabitants, and that local boards should be established in all rural districts where ‘intelligent local agency can be found.’ Secondly, it urged the Provincial Governments to ensure that all local boards, whether urban or rural, should have a ‘large preponderance’ of non-official members, and that these members should be entitled to hold office for terms of not less than two years. In practice, this would mean that, at any given

moment, at least two thirds of the members of each local board and municipal council would be 'non-officials'. Third, the Resolution insisted that members of boards and municipal councils should be chosen by election 'where local circumstances will permit' (especially in all towns of 'any considerable size') and suggested that the practice of election should be introduced gradually even to 'backward rural tracts.' Regarding methods of election, the Resolution suggested that the Provincial Governments 'consult the leading Natives of each locality ... as to the arrangements most likely to meet their local circumstances.' Fourth, and most controversially, the Resolution urged that official chairmen of councils should be avoided at all costs, and that non-official members must be 'led to feel that real power is placed in their hands, and that they have real responsibilities to discharge.' Fifth, as a consequence of the need for financial decentralization, the 1882 Resolution urged that municipal councils and rural local boards be given full management of all local rates and taxes, and that they should be empowered to initiate and direct the construction of all local works.²⁵

These were very substantial reforms given the existing state of municipal and local management in India, which, despite a raft of reforms during the early 1870s, was rudimentary at best. Prior to 1882, the Central Provinces was alone in widely applying the elective principle in local government. Even the Presidencies lagged far behind the new ideal. Of the Bengal Presidency's eighty-six municipalities, only four admitted elected members.²⁶ Moreover, in three of these municipalities, elected members comprised less than half of all councilors.²⁷ All four municipalities, including Calcutta, had appointed official chairmen. In the Bombay presidency, which in 1882 contained 106 towns with over 10,000 inhabitants, the Bombay City Corporation alone admitted elected members – this despite the fact that the large, prosperous cities of Poona and Ahmadabad had for years agitated for elected municipal councils. As in the Bengal

municipalities, the elected Bombay City councilors comprised less than half of the entire council membership, and the council's chairman was an appointed official. Madras was no different. Half the membership of the Madras City Commission was appointed and its President was an official. Moreover, in a Presidency with over 500 towns and cities containing populations of *at least* 5,000 inhabitants, only 48 had been incorporated into municipalities, and only twelve of these municipalities were even partially elective.²⁸ Outside the Presidencies, conditions of local government were even less advanced. The membership of the Punjab's 195 municipal commissions was almost entirely appointed, and the leadership of these local bodies was entirely official.²⁹ The same was true of district committees in the Northwest Provinces.³⁰ In Assam local government was almost entirely unknown, and what did exist was dominated by European planters and their agents.³¹

The 1882 Resolution carried no statutory force. It urged, but could not compel, Provincial Governments to effect reform. Consequently, very few of its proposed reforms were adopted. A handful of Provincial Governments put elements of these reforms into place. The Madras Government, for instance, passed legislation in 1884 and 1885 which drastically reduced the number of officials sitting as members of its municipal councils and which significantly increased the number of municipal councils in operation.³² Despite such bright spots, however, the Resolution made very little impact on the actual operation of local government in British India. Sir Ashley Eden's belief that local government reform 'must be introduced with the utmost caution', was more representative of the skeptical Provincial response to Ripon's Resolution, and indeed Ashley's Bengal Local Government Act of 1883 refused to reform local government outside the existing municipalities.³³ Regardless of the Resolution's ultimate success or failure in *implementing* local government reform, however, the arguments mobilized by Ripon

and his fellow reformers to win support for the Resolution exercised a long-lasting influence over Indian reform discourse.³⁴ These arguments also reveal a great deal about value assigned by Victorian Liberals to local government reform. In particular, they reveal the centrality ‘political education’ to Liberal conceptualizations of the utility and purpose of local government. Liberal elaborations of the acculturating functions of local government suffused the debates over Ripon’s Resolution. Indeed, they lay at the very heart of the Resolution itself. ‘It is not, primarily, with a view to improvement in administration that this measure is put forward and supported,’ the Resolution famously claimed, ‘[rather] it is chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education.’³⁵

Ripon himself claimed that there was no greater or more important political object than the promotion of ‘political education’, and he was not alone in this belief.³⁶ Evelyn Baring, the Gladstonian Finance Member considered by most Indian officials to be a metropolitan ‘doctrinaire’ wholly unacquainted with, and uninterested in, the ‘facts of the ground’, similarly emphasized the importance of political education. When, in May 1882, Hartington urged caution in promoting local government reform, Baring responded that the encouragement of native ‘political education’ was inherently cautious and he further confessed that he was ‘convinced that the only reasonable plan open to government is to induce the people themselves to contribute as far as may be to the management of their own affairs, - and to develop, or create if need be, a capacity for self-help in respect of all matters that have not, for imperial reasons, to be retained in the hands of the representatives of government.’³⁷ This emphasis on ‘learning by doing’ also found broad support outside official circles. From Bombay, Javerilal Umiashankar Yajnik claimed that ‘public spirit’ and civic responsibility could only be developed by ‘habituating the people to a course of public and political life ... The extension of Local Self-

Government is desired', he claimed, 'as "*an instrument of political and popular education.*"'³⁸ Ripon, perhaps naively given the undermining effect that local government reform would have on official authority, believed that this project of psychological engineering would meet with universal approval, and was clearly surprised when not everyone shared his vision. 'That phrase "political education", Ripon claimed in 1884, 'has been a good deal criticized, but for my own part I adhere to it ... indeed to me it seems so extremely natural and obvious that the extension of Local Self-Government must be an important instrument of political education, that I should have thought the statement was one which could not be contested.'³⁹ The criticism of which Ripon complained came almost exclusively from Lyttonian Conservatives eager to voice their deep skepticism of local government's capacity to transform native habits of mind.

In the months immediately following the Resolution's publication, the Governor of Bombay, Sir James Fergusson, emerged as the mouthpiece of opposition to Indian local government reform. Fergusson had arrived in Bombay just weeks prior to Ripon's appointment as Viceroy. Like Ripon, he was a political appointee - Disraeli had appointed Fergusson to the Governorship just one month before resigning from office.⁴⁰ Fergusson was a committed Tory, standing as a Conservative in no fewer than thirteen elections, sitting as a Conservative MP in eight separate Parliaments, and serving as under-secretary of state for India in Derby's second and Salisbury's first governments. Indeed, it is likely that Fergusson never would have gone to Bombay in the first place had he been returned to Parliament for Greenock in 1878. As it happened, he lost the election by a mere sixty votes, sailed for India in March, 1880, and quickly became Ripon's most vocal and formidable critic. In late May, 1882 Fergusson confessed to Ripon his skepticism over the viability of non-official local board presidents. 'Except in Bombay,' claimed Fergusson, 'there has been little or no disposition [among 'leading natives'] to take the initiative or even to

cooperate intelligently' in administrative matters.⁴¹ These concerns were then further elaborated, and extended into a rival plan for local government reform, by Fergusson four months later when the government of Bombay issued its own Resolution attacking Ripon's general policy of Indian local self-government.

After characterizing Ripon's proposals for local self-government as both 'premature' and 'very radical', the Bombay Resolution strongly urged that the Collectors, acting under the control and orders of their respective District Commissioners, should continue to act as Presidents of their respective municipalities and District Local Fund Committees for the foreseeable future. 'To entrust at once,' warned the Bombay Resolution, 'with full administrative functions persons who, however estimable and public spirited they may be, have never before exercised such powers or had any previous training, and to deprive them at the same time of the council and guidance of the officers who have hitherto devised and carried out all reforms and superintended the operations of various committees, would be a hazardous step and a measure which this Government is not prepared to adopt.'⁴² In addition to enabling local communities to overcome, or at least to successfully manage, caste and sectarian enmities, official leadership was said by the Bombay Resolution to be the only means of promoting public health and of avoiding wasteful public expenditure. 'It is not improbable,' augured the Resolution, 'that if native communities and their representatives were allowed absolutely unrestricted discretion, vaccination and sanitation would in some districts, ere many years, become completely things of the past and be utterly disregarded.'⁴³ Although the Bombay Resolution conceded the propriety of elections in City and Town municipalities, it nonetheless maintained that no more than half of any municipal corporation's membership should be elected, and that no fewer than half should be composed of appointed officials.⁴⁴

Ripon was in no doubt about Fergusson's motives, describing the Bombay Resolution as a piece of 'political mischief.'⁴⁵ Writing in early October to Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff, the newly arrived Liberal Governor of Madras and an enthusiastic supporter of Ripon's program for local self-government, Ripon characterized the Bombay Resolution as Tory propaganda guilty of misrepresenting 'in the most flagrant manner' the intentions of the Government of India. 'Fergusson has put out his resolution about local self-government,' wrote Ripon, 'the first paragraphs of it are evidently intended for the consumption of his Tory friends at home.' Having established the party political nature of the Bombay Resolution, Ripon urged further politicization of the debate over Indian local self-government. 'It would be a very useful thing,' Ripon told Grant-Duff, 'in case the subject should be discussed in Parliament, if you would give a counterblast to Fergusson ... if Bombay is to blow its Tory penny whistle why should not Madras sound its Liberal trumpet?'⁴⁶ Ripon's comfort in enlisting Grant-Duff's support on such baldly political terms had been encouraged by Grant-Duff's earlier articulations of the basis of his support for Ripon's Resolution. In June, 1882 Grant-Duff had confessed to Ripon that his 'desire to extend and intensify, if I may use that expression, local self-government' had proceeded out of the fact that he and Ripon had 'grown up in the same political school.'⁴⁷ Moreover, Ripon and Grant-Duff were not alone in conceptualizing Indian local government reform in party political terms. The *Indian Spectator*, for instance, which enthusiastically supported Ripon's Resolution, rejoiced at the politicization of Indian domestic policy. 'This single reform,' claimed the newspaper, 'in itself may vindicate the advent of the Liberals to power as a direct gain to India.'⁴⁸

Ripon, Grant-Duff, Baring and other Liberal promoters of Indian local government reform were, however, more circumspect in their *public* pronouncements. While happy to speak the

language of political partisanship in private, many prominent supporters of Indian local government reform publicly characterized Ripon Resolution as an apolitical legacy of Lord Mayo's earlier reforms.⁴⁹ Indeed, many Liberal professions of support for the Resolution were tellingly defensive in their vigorous denial of the 'commonplace view' that Indian local self-government reform was a Liberal measure. The Liberal parliamentarian and supporter of Ripon's Resolution Julian Goldsmid, for instance, claimed in 1883 that although 'many have written and spoken ... as if it [the policy of Indian local self-government] had been invented and promulgated by a Liberal Viceroy for party and political objects,' this analysis was 'pure error.'⁵⁰ Whereas many Liberal supporters of Ripon's Resolution publicly denied the measure's political partisanship, the Resolution's critics were in no doubt as to the political valences of Indian local government reform. In his correspondence with Lord Ripon, James Fergusson himself expressed a suspicion 'that the policy now pressed upon us is based upon theoretical rather than practical considerations.'⁵¹ This criticism was frequently leveled against Ripon's Resolution by its critics, not least in Lord Salisbury's description of Ripon's Resolution as being 'full of the catchwords of cosmopolitan Radicalism' and in his consequent charge that 'there are wider political schemes connected with it.'⁵² The Lyttonian Anglo-Indian newspaper *The Englishman* agreed with this assessment, noting that Ripon and his fellow doctrinaire Liberals were 'bent on foisting on India', out of theoretical considerations, local self-government reforms for which the country was not prepared.⁵³

III

Conservative critics of Ripon's Resolution reserved special venom for the Resolution's emphasis on 'political education', which they almost unfailingly characterized as a Liberal 'humbug'. Lytton's critique of 'political education', for instance, stood at the very core of his condemnation

of Ripon's Resolution as an ill-considered and dangerous 'experiment'. 'I am well aware,' declared Lytton in the House of Lords,

Of the commonplaces about the educational influence of local institutions; but I own I attach as little value to that theory as the Governor General in Council attaches to the opinion of his district officers. I do not believe that any people in the world were, or ever will or can be, educated in this manner. The opinion that in England parish vestries have been the great instruments of national political education I believe to be utterly unfounded.⁵⁴

Lytton went on to characterize as a 'dull romance' the view that the babus who would come to dominate liberalized local boards would devote themselves to 'the profitless task of leading selfish, ignorant, narrow-minded peasants to recognize by degrees the working of general principles in the detailed administration of the revenues.'⁵⁵ But Ripon's views on the operation of political education comprised more, according to Lytton, than merely a 'dull romance' – they were also extremely dangerous. The removal of official leadership from local boards would not only fail to inculcate the right sort of attitudes, mentalities, and habits of mind among native populations. It would also result in a complete dereliction of governance. 'The real belief of probably the vast mass of the Indian peasantry,' claimed Lytton, 'is that life is only just worth living, and not by any means worth taking much trouble about; that the evils sent by the unseen Powers ought to be borne with resignation, and that it is certainly extremely troublesome, and probably rather impious, to try to remove them.' In the absence of official leadership, this native apathy would destroy all existing schemes aimed at promoting public health, civic improvement, and famine relief. Ripon's experiment in political education would, in other words, lead to social catastrophe.⁵⁶

In Lytton's critique of the 'cant of political education' we find the two central concerns shared by most critics of Indian local government reform. Namely, that the removal of official superintendence would give free reign to native apathy, narrow-mindedness, and selfishness, and that native-led local regimes would consequently neglect their civic responsibilities, resulting in a complete breakdown of good governance. Fergusson opposed the Resolution on precisely these grounds, warning Ripon in January 1883 that 'by suddenly withdrawing the guiding hands, we shall give the reins to partisan jealousies, to selfish intrigue, and to disloyal feelings.'⁵⁷ The supposed absence of any kind of native civic consciousness or 'public spirit' was repeatedly emphasized by Ripon's critics. Substantial native landlords, for instance, were said to be completely uninterested in public service, and officials held out little hope that this class of men would ever be compelled to take up District Board responsibilities consonant with those of an English county magistrate.⁵⁸ Moreover, the unfitness of native landlords for local government service was said to be a consequence of more than simple apathy. Unlike their English counterparts, native landlords were said to be devoid of any sense of paternal responsibility or expansive civic outlook. As James Munro, the Inspector-General of Police for Bengal, put it: 'of public spirit properly so-called, there has in my experience been no development amongst the Zamindars of the division; they remain as despotic, as disregardful of the interests of their tenants, and as selfish as were their forefathers.'⁵⁹ Although he conceded that 'public spirit' was more advanced among the university educated urban professional class, Munro and his fellow critics of local government reform maintained that native pleaders, journalists and others of this class were far more interested in promoting 'political agendas' than in promoting the 'public good'.⁶⁰ Sir Ashley Eden similarly regretted the influence of these 'ambitious young men' in the Calcutta Corporation, where, he claimed, their chief aim was 'to bring themselves before the

public, and acquire notoriety as speakers, much to the detriment of real business. The more the men of this class push themselves forward,' he went on, 'the more do the real working men – men of substance and strong interest in the welfare of the town – shrink from participation in the management of municipal affairs.'⁶¹

If native professionals were considered by Ripon's critics to be grasping and over-eager (for all the wrong reasons) for local self-government, most other natives were characterized as unwilling to participate. In their various reports on the feasibility of Ripon's scheme, the Bombay Collectors repeatedly emphasized the apathy of non-official local board members as yet further evidence of the foreignness of 'public spirit' to the native mind. 'It will, I fear, be admitted,' noted the Commissioner of the Bombay Northern District, 'by those who are most conversant with the workings of these local bodies, that there is, as a rule, little of life in their proceedings, or of public spirit in their supervision. It will generally be acknowledged that if the results obtained are traced to their sources, they will, in eight cases out of ten, be found to have been effected by the pressure put on the committees by their official members.'⁶² The First Assistant Collector of Surat similarly claimed that the native 'dislike to accept so much responsibility' would comprise the greatest obstacle to successful local government reform.⁶³ Moreover, native apathy was said to give way only in cases where individual self-interest could be found. According to the Assistant Collector of Kanara, although non-official membership on a local board was sought after, 'none of the members is willing to take upon themselves the burden of active membership, and when any of them do attend, it is generally with some purely selfish end in view.'⁶⁴ The Collector of Panch Mahals fully endorsed this view, noting that 'the people are to a certain extent apathetic, but ... they always show themselves fully alive when their own immediate interests are concerned.'⁶⁵ Indeed, evaluations of native 'selfishness' and

‘narrowness’ lay at the very heart of official opposition to local government reform – especially in the mofussil districts – and native selfishness, and the corresponding ‘inability to take a broad view’, was repeatedly characterized as especially inimical to the development of ‘public spirit’. These were precisely the terms upon which the Collector of Satara, William Pratt, staked his opposition to Ripon’s reforms. Among the non-official members of his district’s local boards, claimed Pratt, ‘the public good is a word that is hardly understood. They can understand the good of an individual, or of a class, or of a certain interest, but not of the public. For this reason they require to be controlled by those who have no interests, but those of the public good, at heart.’⁶⁶

In addition to emphasizing the challenges of native apathy and narrow-mindedness, many critics claimed that caste distinctions and religious sectarianism fatally undermined the capacity of local self-government for developing ‘public spirit’ and advancing native political education generally. ‘Local self-government in its true scope,’ claimed one such critic, ‘is possible only through the leveling of caste and the suspension of creed antagonism.’ If implemented before such ‘leveling’ and ‘suspension’ was accomplished, local self-government would only encourage and intensify sectarian conflict, and consequently further delay the development of ‘public spirit’ among native communities.⁶⁷ Such views were widespread, especially among the Collectors and other officials in rural districts. Joshua King, Collector of Ahmednagar, blamed what he called ‘the narrow prejudices and sympathies’ of the native world-view on the ‘isolation of caste’, and doubted whether such narrowness could ever be enlarged into anything like a concern for the public good.⁶⁸

Of course, political education was valued by its proponents precisely for its supposed instrumentality in ‘enlarging sympathies’ and developing conceptions of the ‘public good’. Supporters of Indian local government reform consequently argued that, far from undermining

the case for reform, prejudices of caste and creed made Ripon's proposed reforms all the more necessary. The Bombay Liberal Javerilal Umiashankar Yajnik, for instance, was quite certain that local government reform comprised the best and most effective tool for erasing such sectarianism. There was a time, admitted Yajnik, when the presence and guiding influence of the Collector was needed to overcome caste enmities and local factionalism. Moreover, Yajnik conceded 'the existence of caste enmities and factions among members of certain local boards is not denied.' However, Yajnik also claimed that these caste enmities would only give way once local self-government was realized, and that, in particular, they '*may be expected to be minimized under a sense of personal responsibility*' once the official leadership of local boards was removed.⁶⁹ Yajnik was not alone, among supporters of Ripon's Resolution, in emphasizing the transformative influence that giving non-officials a greater measure of 'responsibility' would have. In Madras, the High Court advocate Sir Panambakkam Anandacharlu regarded the removal of official local board leadership as conducive to 'compelling the exercise of reflective and acquisitive powers on the part of the [non-official] members, who, under the weight of real responsibility, are sure to be much more assiduous than when they play second fiddle or play no fiddle at all as at present.'⁷⁰ Official supporters of the Resolution expressed similar views. In the Punjab, Charles Aitchison admitted that 'amongst the native community, the various capacities requisite in public life are as yet, for the most part, immature.' Yet he also claimed that 'it is precisely for this reason that a period of public and political training is necessary ... placed in new positions of responsibility, the representatives of the people on local boards will, it is to hoped, become, year by year, more intelligent, independent, and self-reliant.'⁷¹ Alfred Lyall, the Governor of Assam, agreed completely, claiming to Ripon that the removal of official local board leadership would have miraculous effects on native dispositions and habits of mind. 'It is

this which mainly will educate people,' declared Lyall, 'not merely sitting at a table to decide what shall be done, but taking a hand in doing it oneself, learning by ones failures, and gaining a knowledge of the limitations of human capacity.'⁷²

The Bombayite author 'Sina' similarly understood the development of non-official responsibility and accountability as central to Ripon's project for political education. According to Sina's analysis, official leadership of local boards was counterproductive in that it encouraged native 'passivity' and compelled non-officials to 'stand aside while everything is done for them'. This dynamic merely reinforced the native habits of 'narrowness' and 'selfishness' about which the Collectors complained. 'The natives should not always be made to go in leading strings,' warned Sina.

It is the old story of not allowing a boy to go into the water until he can swim; he never will learn to swim unless he goes into the water and incurs a little risk and paddles about ... [moreover] a school master is a much cleverer person than any of his pupils, but it does not follow that he should do all their tasks for them ... individuals may not do a thing so well as the officers of Government, yet it is desirable that it should be done by them rather than by the government as a means of their own mental education, as being the practical part of the popular education of a free people, taking them out of the narrow circle of personal and family selfishness and accustoming them to the comprehension of joint interests and the management of joint concerns.⁷³

No less a figure than A.O. Hume himself, who, incidentally, considered Indian local government reform to be of 'momentous' importance, justified Ripon's program in exactly the same way.

Hume agreed with the official view that Indians were ‘among the most selfish people in the world’ and lacked any conception of the public good. However, he, like Sina and many others, claimed that local self-government was the only tool available for effecting an enlargement of the native mind and the creation of Indian ‘public spirit’.⁷⁴

As the preceding demonstrates, opposition to, and support of, Ripon’s Resolution hinged on the relative faith placed by individuals in the capacity for local self-government to transform attitudes and habits of mind, and therefore on the value and viability of ‘political education’. It is clear that whereas critics of Ripon’s Resolution conceptualized local government as an end in itself (which is to say, as a guarantor of sound and public spirited governance), supporters saw it as both an end and a means to that end. Put another way, critics of Ripon’s vision for political education argued that ‘public spirit’ should be a *pre-requisite* of self-government, and could never be its by-product. In particular, critics of local government’s supposed role in promoting political education denied that the right sort of governing attitudes and mentalities could ever be engineered so quickly and artificially. They instead insisted that authentic habits of mind could only develop through a long-term, organic process of slow evolution. Horticultural metaphors which emphasized the slow growth of *true* political education were repeatedly invoked by critics of Ripon’s Resolution. The Bombay Resolution, for instance, claimed at its very outset that ‘political education is a tender plant of very slow growth, and it cannot wisely be forced into a premature development.’⁷⁵ From the North West Provinces, Ripon received similar warnings that ‘popular institutions must grow; they can’t be made to order, and the attempt to create them by order will interfere with their natural growth. By all means let them be nurtured and fostered. But not forced.’⁷⁶ The precise means by which critics of Indian local self-government intended to nurture and foster such institutions and attitudes, however, remained unelaborated. Ripon, for

one, was deeply frustrated by this ‘chicken and egg’ argument. ‘The Government of India have distinctly explained that they consider the extension of local self-government to be chiefly desirable as an instrument of political and popular education,’ Ripon reminded Fergusson in October 1882,

[yet] the Governor of Bombay in Council would, it appears, have preferred to “create and educate a public spirit” before entrusting more extended powers to Municipalities and Local Fund Committees. It is not explained what are the measures which His Excellency in Council would have proposed to adopt for the purpose of creating and educating public spirit; and in the absence of any information on the subject, the Governor General in Council cannot but feel much doubt as to the power of any Government to create public spirit otherwise than by affording the public a practical opportunity for displaying and cultivating such a spirit in the management of some portion, however limited, of public affairs. It is far easier for an Executive Government, by direct action, to check and hamper the development of public spirit than to create it.⁷⁷

Whatever means Fergusson and his fellow conservatives had in mind for promoting ‘true’ political education, one thing was certain: they were deeply critical of the Liberal faith in ‘learning by doing’. In Munro’s words, ‘the gift of political freedom to a people unprepared for it is but as a present of edged tools to children – a thing to be played with to the ultimate injury of the recipients of the boon.’⁷⁸

IV

Although most fully elaborated in India, the Liberal faith in local government's educative capacity was equally strong in Britain itself. The character forming capacities of local self-government had been central to Joshua Toulmin Smith's early and mid-Victorian advocacy for municipal reform. 'True institutions of local self-government,' Toulmin Smith famously claimed in 1851, 'supply immediate and perfect means, *and the only means*, of thoroughly developing the powers and faculties of every man.'⁷⁹ By the early 1860s, this view had become a Liberal commonplace. J.S. Mill, for one, was absolutely convinced of the utility of local government in imparting to its participants the values necessary for the safe and effective operation of a liberal polity. 'In the case of local bodies,' argued Mill in 1861,

besides the function of electing, many citizens in turn have the chance of being elected, and many, either by selection or by rotation, fill one or other of the numerous local executive offices. In these positions they have to act, for public interests, as well as to think and speak, and the thinking cannot all be done by proxy. It may be added that these local functions, not being in general sought by the higher ranks, carry down the important political education which they are the means of conferring, to a much lower grade in society. The mental discipline being thus a more important feature in local concerns than in the general affairs of the State.⁸⁰

Using Millbank Systems' digitized *Hansard* and the *Gale News Vault* database it is possible to chart the increasing frequency with which the term 'political education' was used by the political classes during the second half of the nineteenth century. In both databases, invocations of 'political education' reach an apex during the 1880s. The *Gale* data is particularly suggestive of political education's ubiquity during this decade, when its incidence was more than triple that of

the 1860s and nearly nine times that of the 1850s.⁸¹ Moreover, as in India, so in Britain it was Liberals who, during the 1880s, spoke the language of ‘political education’ most fluently and with greatest conviction. In Parliament, during debates on the 1888 County Councils Bill, it was Henry Peyton Cobb, the Liberal MP for Rugby, who spoke of fostering the ‘germs of local life’ and promoting ‘the political education of the people.’⁸² Conservative advocates of the measure failed to cast their support in such terms. In public, it was Charles Dilke and Joseph Chamberlain who placed ‘political education’ at the heart of their arguments for an extension and liberalization of local government.⁸³ Indeed, advanced Liberals were especially enthusiastic about the transformative impact of ‘political education’ through participation in local government. Charles Bradlaugh, for one, regarded local boards, vestries, and town councils as ‘so many schools of political education, in which men, and women too, might learn self-government.’⁸⁴ The pamphlet literature concerning domestic political education was similarly dominated by Liberal voices, and its themes were nearly identical to those emphasized by supporters of Ripon’s Resolution in India. One finds the ‘university Liberal’ George Broderick, for instance, arguing in 1882 that the reform of English local government would encourage the development of public spirit and minimize sectarian (in the English context class, rather than religious) conflict.⁸⁵ In the same year, the London solicitor and ‘staunch Liberal’ George Whale published his *Fragment on Political Education*, which characterized local government as a ‘training school for imperial government’ which would necessarily impart to its participants the expansive outlook and related ‘valuable mental habits’ essential to the development of public spirit.⁸⁶ Four years later, the *Westminster Review* essay ‘Local Self-Government and Political Education’ made precisely the same argument, claiming in particular that English local government is ‘valuable for this reason among others, that it forms a valuable school of training

and education for the production of those mental qualities which are necessary to equip a citizen to take part in Imperial concerns.’⁸⁷ Indeed, this view of local government’s instrumentality in promoting political education had become so widespread by 1886 that one critic, writing in the *Saturday Review*, identified it as a ‘consecrated fiction’.⁸⁸

The diffusion and increasingly widespread endorsement, from the 1860s, of this ‘consecrated fiction’ was a consequence of two simultaneous developments. In the first place, as E.P. Hennock and Derek Fraser have demonstrated, the social profile of municipal corporation membership across England was dramatically altered between the early-1850s and mid-1880s. As municipal corporations shifted their focus from the management of corporate property to the development of public health infrastructure, smaller ratepayers, representing shopkeepers and other petty commercialists anxious about the rate increases which such development would necessarily entail, increasingly replaced men of high social standing and wealth on municipal councils.⁸⁹ This alteration of council membership was partially enabled by the Small Tenements Rating Act of 1850 and the Municipal Franchise Act of 1858, both of which expanded the municipal electorate by promoting the enfranchisement of compound tenants.⁹⁰ According to the report of the 1859 Select Committee tasked with evaluating the working of these Acts, ‘wherever the Act of 1850 has been carried into full operation, the lowest class of the population have acquired a predominant influence over municipal elections ... the character and dignity of the corporation is said to be lowered by the intrusion of unworthy members.’⁹¹ The transformation of municipal representation in mid-Victorian Leeds illustrates the impact of these changes. In 1836, the Leeds Town Council was dominated by the city’s social and economic elite. Fifty-three of the Council’s sixty four members were drawn from Leeds’ gentry, professional, merchant and manufacturing classes. By 1851 the social profile of the Council had changed dramatically: the

‘shopocracy’ had captured the majority of seats, and the previously dominant elites accounted for just half of the total membership. The declining fortunes of the professional class, incidentally the class regarded by contemporaries as most cognizant of the ‘public good’ and least likely to advocate narrow sectional interests, were particularly striking. In 1838, fourteen professionals sat as Leeds councilors; in 1851 there were only three; and by 1874 professionals had been completely excluded from the Council.⁹² Although professionals fared slightly better in other Councils, the general trend toward a ‘lower social standard’ of Councilor was everywhere the same, and attracted much criticism from contemporary observers of municipal affairs. In Hennock’s words ‘the replacement of substantial and respectable men by people “lower in the scale” was, to put it bluntly, regarded as a deplorable lapse.’⁹³ Measures were, of course, taken to counteract this supposed deterioration in the character of municipal membership. Although the 1869 Municipal Corporations Act, for instance, is primarily remembered for extending the municipal franchise, it also sought to elevate the social profile of municipal councils by entitling suburban property holders resident *outside* the municipal boundary to stand for election. This all suggests that, from the 1860s, the involvement of ‘fit and proper persons’ in local governance could no longer be taken for granted. Increasingly, ‘fitness’ needed to be inculcated among sitting councilors. This necessitated a reconceptualization of the functions of local government and encouraged the view that political education should be one of these functions.

The second development which encouraged Liberal faith in political education was the mid-Victorian emergence of an obsession with ‘character’. In Stefan Collini’s analysis, the transition from a Whiggish language of ‘virtue’ to a Liberal language of ‘character’ sped up markedly during the 1850s and 60s in the context of debate over franchise reform. From the 1860s onward, the possession of character (which, in its ‘evaluative meaning’, implied the possession of self-

restraint, consciousness of civic duty, and strenuous effort) became intimately bound up with the criteria for belonging to the body politic.⁹⁴ More than this, however, mid and late-Victorian Liberals also believed that the reach of the state profoundly influenced individual character formation, and were consequently careful to minimize any government scheme which might have the effect of ‘weakening’ the character of its citizens. This concern for the role played by the state in forming character translated easily into an interest in the extent to which participation in political institutions might enable the growth of character. After all, what was the purpose of political education if not to impart ‘character’ to those who lacked it?

Why, then, did the Liberal language of ‘political education’ reach its apotheosis during the 1880s? To be sure, debates over Irish Home Rule and Parliamentary franchise reform played their parts.⁹⁵ However, as the pamphlet literature suggests, local government reform remained a central concern of those who invoked the rhetoric of ‘political education’. Indeed, it is more than coincidental that a major, but curiously overlooked, Municipal Corporations Act of 1882 *abolished* property qualifications for prospective councilors altogether by providing that every person qualified to elect councilors was also qualified to be elected. Nor is it coincidental that this Act, and the subsequent 1884 Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Act, codified, for the first time, specific provisions permanently disfranchising and excluding from municipal office any councilors found guilty of accepting or offering bribes. The crisis of confidence which had been building since the 1850s over the ‘fitness’ of municipal councilors crested during the 1880s. Sir Mackenzie Chalmers, writing in 1883, believed that the domination of municipal government by the ‘small tradesman class’, and the ‘abstention of the more educated classes in taking part in local government’ comprised the ‘great and growing evil’ of the day.⁹⁶

In the presence of such deep anxieties over the corruption of the municipal ideal and the loss of 'public spirit', local government became both the problem and the answer. Liberals mobilized the language of political education to allay such anxieties and to justify Liberal legislation aimed at the further democratization of local government. According to the Liberal analysis, while legislation could discourage corruption, only political education could abnegate self-interested and corrupt impulses altogether. This analysis was applied with equal force and emphasis in both India and Britain. Yet, by abstracting the debates on Indian local self-government from concurrent metropolitan discourse on 'political education' historians have lost sight of the striking consistency of Liberal thought on the importance of local government reform. Moreover, by ignoring the nature of the Indian debates, the importance assigned by late-Victorian Liberals to local government reform has been misrepresented. Accounts which emphasize the importance assigned by Liberals to the utility of institutions of local government in effecting retrenchment, efficiency, and economy must be supplemented by a recognition that local government had a more profound role. It was no less than the training ground and engine for the development of 'character' and the generation of 'public spirit'.

*University of Edinburgh, School of History, Classic and Archaeology, William Robertson Wing, Old Medical School, Teviot Place, Edinburgh, EH8 9AG. Ben.Weinstein@ed.ac.uk

¹ Quoted in E.A. Whaley Cohen, *A young Victorian in India* (London, 1957), p. 173.

² Anil Seal, *The emergence of Indian nationalism: competition and collaboration in the later nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 151-2.

³ Marquis of Ripon to W.E. Forster, 26 May, 1881, Ripon Papers, British Library (BL) Add Ms 43596, fo. 56.

⁴ Sarvepalli Gopal, *British policy in India, 1858-1905* (Cambridge, 1965), p. 129.

⁵ James Thompson, *British political culture and the idea of 'public opinion', 1867-1914* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 85-135. For Gladstone's view, see W.E. Gladstone, 'The platform, its rise and progress', *Nineteenth Century*, 31 (Apr., 1892), pp. 686-9. Elaine Hadley has given a wider ranging account of this process of acculturation in her *Living liberalism: practical citizenship in mid-Victorian Britain* (Chicago, 2010).

⁶ Joseph Chamberlain, *The radical programme* (London, 1885), p. 235.

⁷ Ripon to Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff, 18 July, 1882, Grant-Duff Papers BL MSS.EUR.F.234/60, fo. 36.

⁸ Gopal dismissively characterizes the Resolution as a 'reform to conserve measure' aimed merely at pacifying the babus. See, Gopal, *The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, 1880-1884* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 83-4.

⁹ Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 201.

¹⁰ Douglas Haynes, *Rhetoric and ritual in colonial India: the shaping of a public culture in Surat city, 1852-1928* (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 97-107.

¹¹ Jan Palmowski, 'Liberalism and local government in late nineteenth century Germany and England', *Historical Journal*, 45 (2002), p. 387.

¹² In H.J. Hanham's view, local self-government had become 'part of the orthodox Liberal creed' by the 1850s. H.J. Hanham, *The nineteenth century constitution, 1815-1914* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 371.

¹³ See Eugenio Biagini, *Liberty, retrenchment, and reform: popular liberalism in the age of Gladstone, 1860-1880* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 1.

¹⁴ For the Local Government Board, see Christine Bellamy, *Administering central-local relations, 1871-1919: the Local Government Board in its fiscal and cultural context* (Manchester, 1988); P.J. Waller, *Town, city, and nation: England, 1850-1914* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 300-305.

¹⁵ Quoted in P.J. Waller, *Democracy and sectarianism: a political and social history of Liverpool, 1868-1939* (Liverpool, 1981), p. 83.

¹⁶ Eugenio Biagini, 'Popular liberals, Gladstonian finance, and the debate on taxation, 1860-1874', in Eugenio Biagini and Alastair Reid (eds.), *Currents of radicalism: popular radicalism, organized labour and party politics in Britain, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 154-6.

¹⁷ Jonathan Parry, *The rise and fall of Liberal government in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, 1993), p. 241. D.A. Hamer similarly emphasizes the importance of local government reform as an 'umbrella' issue aimed at maintaining Liberal cohesion during the 1880s. See, D.A. Hamer, *Liberal politics in the age of Gladstone and Rosebury: a study in leadership and policy* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 98, 101-2.

¹⁸ Christopher Wallace, 'The Liberals and Afghanistan, 1878-80', *Historical Research*, 85 (May, 2012), pp. 306-28; J.P. Parry, *The politics of patriotism: English liberalism, national identity and Europe, 1830-1886* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 323-86. See also, Charles Dilke, *The eastern question* (London, 1878).

¹⁹ Robert Lowe, 'Imperialism', *Fortnightly Review*, 24, (Oct., 1878), pp. 453-65.

²⁰ See especially, William Ewart Gladstone, 'England's mission', *Nineteenth Century*, 4 (Sept., 1878), pp. 560-84.

²¹ Gladstone called it the ‘great undoing process’ of all that ‘the late Government bequeathed us’.

Gladstone to Ripon, 13 March, 1882, Ripon Papers, BL Add Mss 43552, fo. 43.

²² Given its political significance, the 1882 Resolution and should be understood as the centerpiece of Ripon’s wider reform programme. For the Ilbert Bill, see, Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial masculinity: the manly Englishman and the effeminate Bengali* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 33-68, and Edwin Hirschmann, *White mutiny: the Ilbert bill crisis in India and the genesis of the Indian National Congress* (Columbia, MO, 1980). For the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act, see Prem Narain, ‘The ethos of the Indian language press after the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act’, *Quarterly Review of Historical Studies*, 15 (1975), pp. 77-89.

²³ Evelyn Baring, ‘Recent events in India’, *Nineteenth Century*, 14 (Oct., 1883), pp. 579-80.

²⁴ ‘Resolution of the Government of India (Department of Finance and Commerce), no. 3353, 30 Sept., 1881, *P[arliamentary] P[apers]*, LI (1883), pp. 8-13.

²⁵ ‘Resolution of the Government of India’, 18 May, 1882, *PP*, LI, pp. 25-32.

²⁶ ‘H.M. Kisch, Esq., officiating secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India’, 12 July, 1881, *PP*, LI, pp. 148-9.

²⁷ From 1876, two-thirds of the members of the Calcutta Corporation were non-officials. For the Calcutta Corporation, see Chris Furedy, ‘New men and political clubs in Calcutta in the 1870s and 1880s: a colonial mix of ideology and self-interest’, *Indian Journal of Politics*, 13 (1979), pp. 63-73.

²⁸ ‘Memorandum showing the changes that have occurred since 1881 as to local self-government (Madras)’, Grant-Duff Papers, BL MSS.F.234/80. See also, ‘Committee on local self-government [Madras] to the Chief Secretary to the Government’, 16 Oct., 1882, *PP*, LI, pp. 131-3.

-
- ²⁹ 'W.M. Young, Esq., Secretary to the Government of Panjab, to the Secretary to the Government of India', 7 Sept., 1882, *PP*, LI, p. 104.
- ³⁰ 'Solution of the Government of the Northwestern Provinces and Oudh', *PP*, LI, pp. 171-2.
- ³¹ 'Resolution of the Chief Commissioner of Assam', 2 Nov., 1882, *PP*, LI, pp. 254-6.
- ³² 'Memorandum', Grant-Duff Papers, BL MSS.F.234/80.
- ³³ 'Colman Macaulay, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India', 8 Apr., 1882, *PP*, LI, p. 75.
- ³⁴ P.N. Chopra, 'Genesis and growth of the Indian National Congress', *Journal of Indian History*, 50 (1972), pp. 389-414; Anil Seal, *The emergence of Indian nationalism*.
- ³⁵ 'Resolution of the Government of India', p. 27.
- ³⁶ 'Viceroy's minute on local self-government in India, 10 Nov., 1884', Ripon Papers, BL Add Mss 43639, fo. 82. See also, Ripon to Forster, 26 Mar., 1883, Ripon Papers, BL Add Mss 43597, fo. 36.
- ³⁷ 'Draft letter from the Marquis of Hartington ' and 'Council letter to Sec. of State for India 23 May, 1882', BL India Office Records L/PJ/6/67, file 1027.
- ³⁸ Javerilal Umiashankar Yajnik, *Note on local self-government in the Bombay Presidency* (Bombay, 1882), p. 4.
- ³⁹ George Frederick Samuel Robinson, *Speeches of the Marquis of Ripon, Viceroy and General-Governor of India, 1883-4* (Calcutta, 1884), p. 235.
- ⁴⁰ Amit Kuar Gupta, *Between a Tory and a Liberal: Bombay under Sir James Fergusson, 1880-85* (Bombay, 1978), p. 2-3.
- ⁴¹ Sir James Fergusson to Ripon, 31 May, 1882, Fergusson Papers BL MSS.EUR.E.214/7, fos. 269-79.

-
- 42 'Resolution of the Government of Bombay', 19 September, 1882, *PP*, LI, p. 41.
- 43 'Resolution of the Government of Bombay', p. 50.
- 44 'Resolution of the Government of Bombay,' pp. 42-3.
- 45 Ripon to Fergusson, 30 Dec., 1882, Fergusson Papers, BL MSS.EUR.E.214/6, fo. 201.
- 46 Ripon to Grant-Duff, 4 Oct., 1882, Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff Papers, BL MSS.EUR.F.234/60, fos. 48-9.
- 47 Grant Duff to Ripon, 23 June, 1882, Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff Papers, BL MSS.EUR.F.234/59, fos. 18-19.
- 48 *Indian Spectator*, 25 May, 1882.
- 49 See, for instance, Baring's essay 'Recent events in India', which credits Mayo for initiating the reforms now associated with Ripon. *Nineteenth Century*, 14 (Oct., 1883), p. 579.
- 50 Julian Goldsmid, 'Questions of the day in India', *Nineteenth Century*, 13 (May, 1883), p. 741.
- For a further disavowal of the Resolution's political character, see *The Friend of India and Statesman*, 12 Dec., 1882: 'those who think it the offspring of mere Liberal sentiment entirely mistake its origin and character ... the truth is, it is idle to describe or account for it by the use of terms belonging to English party politics, or by reference to the doctrines of any English party.'
- 51 Fergusson to Ripon, 3 Jan., 1883, Sir James Fergusson Papers, BL MSS.EUR.E.214/8, fo. 1.
- 52 *Hansard*, 09 Apr., 1883, cols. 1799-1800.
- 53 *The Englishman*, 22 May, 1882.
- 54 *Hansard*, 09 Apr., 1883, col. 1743.
- 55 *Hansard*, 09 Apr., 1883, col. 1746.
- 56 *Hansard*, 09 Apr., 1883, col. 1747.
- 57 Fergusson to Ripon, 3 Jan, 1883, Fergusson Papers BL MSS.F.234/80, fos. 4-5.

⁵⁸ ‘Minute by the Lieutenant-Governor of the North Western Provinces and Chief Commissioner of Oudh’, 22 Aug., 1882, *Accounts and Proceedings*, p. 220.

⁵⁹ James Munro, *Local self-government and the elective system for Bengal* (Calcutta, 1883), pp. 9-10.

⁶⁰ Munro, *Local self-government*, p. 10

⁶¹ ‘H.M. Kisch, Esq., Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary of the Government of India’, 12 July, 1881, *PP*, LI, p. 149.

⁶² ‘G.H. Sheppard, Esq., Commissioner, N.D. to John Nugent, Esq., Secretary to the Government, Financial Department, Bombay’, 3 Dec., 1881, *PP*, LI, Part II (Appendix), p.1.

⁶³ ‘Memorandum’, 9 Dec., 1881, *PP*, LI, Part II (Appendix), p.10.

⁶⁴ ‘Remarks and suggestions of Mr. Todd, Assistant Collector of Kanara’, 14 Mar., 1882, *PP*, LI, Part II (Appendix), p. 23.

⁶⁵ ‘W. Woodward, Esq., Collector, Panch Mahals, to the Secretary of Government, General Department’, 21, June, 1882, *PP*, LI Part II (Appendix), p. 37.

⁶⁶ ‘Memorandum on the subject of extension of powers to local bodies discussed in the correspondence ending government resolution (Financial Department) No. 3950 of 25th October 1881, , *PP*, LI, Part II (Appendix), p. 33.

⁶⁷ A.P.W., *Local self-government* (Meerut, 1882), p. 8.

⁶⁸ ‘J. King, Esquire, Collector of Ahmednagar, to E.P. Robertson, Esquire, Commissioner, Central Division’, 23 Dec., 1881, *PP*, LI, part II (appendix), p. 32.

⁶⁹ Yajnik, *Note on local self-government*, p. 8.

⁷⁰ Madras Native Association, *Proceedings of the Madras Native Association on the resolution of the Government of India on local self-government* (Madras, 1883), p. 187.

⁷¹ ‘Local self-government in the Punjab’, *PP*, LI, p. 101.

⁷² Alfred Lyall to Ripon, 2 Nov., 1882, Ripon Papers, BL Add Ms 43605, fo.141

⁷³ Sina, *Local self-government* (Bombay, 1882), pp. 7, 16.

⁷⁴ Allan Octavian Hume to Ripon, 30 Dec., 1882, Ripon Papers BL Add Ms 43616, fos. 12-19; ‘Appendix: A.O. Hume on Local Self-Government in India’, in Yajnik, *Note*.

⁷⁵ ‘Resolution of the Government of Bombay’, *PP*, LI, p. 40.

⁷⁶ BL India Office Record L/PJ/6/67, file. 1027.

⁷⁷ ‘A. Mackenzie, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, to the Secretary to the Government of Bombay’, 4 Oct., 1882, *Proceedings and Accounts*, pp. 71-2.

⁷⁸ Munro, *Local self-government*, pp. 2-3.

⁷⁹ Joshua Toulmin Smith, *Local self-government and centralisation* (London, 1851), pp.44. For a wider discussion of Toulmin Smith’s analysis of the character building capacity of local self-government see Benjamin Weinstein, ‘Local self-government is true socialism: Joshua Toulmin Smith, the state, and character formation’, *English Historical Review*, 123 (Oct., 2008), pp. 1193-1228.

⁸⁰ John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on representative government* (London, 1861), p. 276

⁸¹ Incidence of the use of the phrase ‘political education’ in parliamentary debates: 1850s (5); 1860s (19); 1870s (24); 1880s (27); 1890s (14). Incidence of the phrase ‘political education’ appearing in the *Gale News Vault* newspapers: 1850s (385); 1860s (915); 1870s (1404); 1880s (3120); 1890s (1760). For the *Times* alone: 1850s (42); 1860s (91); 1870s (143); 1880s (198); 1890s (146). Moreover, this data is only minimally skewed by reporting on Ripon’s Resolution. When ‘India’ is used as a ‘NOT’ search term, the *Gale* results remain broadly similar to when only ‘political education’ is used as a search term. Results are: 1850s (301); 1860s (733); 1870s

(1108); 1880s (2479); 1890s (1535). For the *Times* alone: 1850s (36); 1860s (74); 1870s (122); 1880s (149); 1890s (125).

⁸² *Hansard*, 7 June, 1888, col. 1455.

⁸³ *Times*, 14 Jan., 1885; 15 Jan., 1885. 15 June, 1885; 7 Oct., 1885;

⁸⁴ *Northampton Mercury*, 15 Jan., 1881

⁸⁵ George C. Broderick, 'Local government in England', in J.W. Probyn (ed.), *Local government and taxation in the United Kingdom* (London, 1882), p. 87. C.T.D. Acland's call to reform County boards into 'instruments of political education' for agricultural labourers appeared in the same collection. See, T.C.D. Acland, 'County Boards', in Probyn (ed.), *Local government and taxation*, p. 90.

⁸⁶ George Whale, *A fragment on political education* (London, 1882), p. 51.

⁸⁷ 'Local self-government and political education', *Westminster Review*, 125 (Apr., 1886), esp. pp. 355-358, 365.

⁸⁸ *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art*, 61, (19 June, 1886), p. 837.

⁸⁹ E.P. Hennock, 'Finance and politics in urban local government, 1835-1900', *Historical Journal*, 6 (1963), pp. 212-225. Barry Doyle, 'The changing functions of urban government: councillors, officials, and pressure groups', in Martin Daunton (ed.) *The Cambridge urban history of Britain: Volume III, 1840-1950* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 298-9.

⁹⁰ Bryan Keith-Lucas, *The English local government franchise: a short history* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 68-9, 71.

⁹¹ 'Report of the select committee of the House of Lords on the operation of the small tenements rating act 1850', *PP*, VII, (1859), Appendix, col.99.

⁹² Derek Fraser, *Urban politics in Victorian England: the structure of politics in Victorian cities* (Leicester, 1976), pp. 129-133.

⁹³ E.P. Hennock, *Fit and proper persons: ideal and reality in nineteenth-century urban government* (Montreal, 1973), pp. 312-314.

⁹⁴ Stefan Collini, *Public moralists: political thought and intellectual life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 109-113, esp. 112. See also, Collini, 'Political theory and the "science of society" in Victorian Britain', *Historical Journal*, 23 (1980).

⁹⁵ In Parliament, the rhetoric of 'political education' often popped up in debates over Irish Home Rule and the extension of the Parliamentary franchise. See, for instance, Robert Hanbury's contribution to the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, in which he warns against the impossibility of instilling 'at once into the minds of the people of Ireland the political qualities and capacities necessary for self-government, when they had not given them the means and the opportunities for political education.' *Hansard*, 18 May, 1886, col. 1358. Of course, Irish Home Rule could itself be conceptualized as a 'local government' reform. For the use of 'political education' in franchise debates, see *Hansard* 26 May, 1884, cols. 1351-2; *Hansard*, 4 Dec., 1884, cols. 711-722.

⁹⁶ M.D. Chalmers, *Local government* (London, 1883), p. 12.